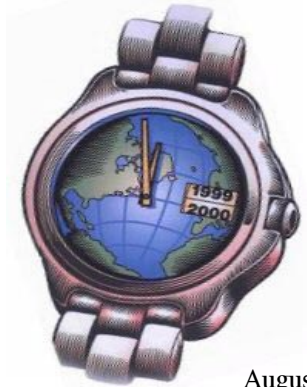


The Year 2000 Are You Ready?



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Year 2000 Gets Real

A large retailer was surprised when its computerized inventory management and pricing system put an entire shipment of brand new goods on deep discount when they had not been on the store's shelves for more than a day. A savvy manager discovered the problem. The store regularly programmed its bar code readers to discount a product after it had not sold for 21 months. But because 21 months from now is in the year 2000, the system became confused and, assuming these products had been sitting around since 1900, slashed their prices. *Beth Piskora, New York Post, 7/4/98*

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Year 2000 Legislation. Representative **David Dreier** introduced a bipartisan Y2K Disclosure bill that addresses the liability problem recently highlighted by the Administration's "Good Samaritan bill". Currently, many companies are reluctant to make information available to the public regarding the status of their Y2K readiness and remediation plans due to the fear that the information will be used against them in massive liability lawsuits. Under the Dreier bill, companies that release information on their own Y2K situation (where they are, what they are doing, what they plan on having done by 2000, etc.) cannot have that information used against them in civil litigation. **Contact Brian Bieron at (202) 225-2305**

Will the FAA be Ready for the Year 2000? House Science Subcommittee on Technology Chair **Connie Morella** heard testimony from the GAO detailing the remaining Y2K challenges faced by the FAA. GAO stated that the good news is that the FAA *"has made progress in managing its Year 2000 problem and has completed critical steps in defining which systems need to be fixed and how to fix them."* However, the bad news is that the FAA is running out of time — *"with less than 17 months to go, the FAA must still correct, test, and implement many of its mission-critical systems. It is doubtful that FAA can adequately do all of this in the time remaining"* With so little time remaining, the GAO stressed that the FAA *"must determine how to ensure continuity of critical operations in the likely event of some systems' failures."* At the hearing Chairwoman Morella stated, *"Now more than ever, it is important that the FAA develops contingency plans, in the event that certain systems are unable to be corrected on time."* In other words, the FAA waited too long to

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**Congress has now held 31 hearings to
focus attention on this issue**

Y2k HORROR STORIES



#62) 1/1/2000, 6:42 AM
400 PLANES STACK UP ABOVE LAX... © PERKINS/97

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begin fixing the problem. Now it is time for the them to start devising back up plans. **Contact Jeff Grove at (202) 225-8844**

Nationwide Field Hearings Organized. Chairman **Steve Horn** will be holding Year 2000 field hearings during the months of August and September. These hearings will provide State and local government officials the opportunity to share information about their Year 2000 efforts. These sessions will also assist Congress in gaining a greater understanding of the challenges State and local governments' face in their Year 2000 readiness and contingency planning. The hearings will take place in New York City, Dallas, New Orleans, and Indianapolis, among other locations. **Contact Russell George at (202) 225-5147**

Governor W. Bush Organizes Texas Year 2000 Workshops. Texas Governor W. Bush is bringing city and county leaders together with information technology managers from across the state of Texas to discuss what needs to be done to ensure the state of Texas will be ready for the new millenium. The workshops are being led by the Office of the Governor, the Texas Department of Information Resources, the General Services Commission, The Texas Association of Counties, the Texas Association of Regional Councils and the Texas Municipal League. **Majority Leader Dick Arney** will be addressing the

August 12th workshop in Dallas. Arney has made a point in stating that *"Federal, State and local Governments must work together, share information and discuss solutions to make sure we're ready,"* The Statewide workshops will be taking place in Austin, Houston, Harlingen, Dallas, Lubbock, and El Paso from Aug 7th - Aug 14th. **Contact the Texas Year 2000 Project Office at (512) 475-2297**

Ways And Means Panel Hits HCFA On Home Care System. Republicans and Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee chided HCFA today for failing to provide specific proposals to fix what was to be a temporary home healthcare payment system. Testifying before the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, HCFA Deputy Administrator Michael Hash offered no specific proposals other than stipulating that changes be budget neutral, have bipartisan support, and not require computer programming changes that conflict with the agency's effort to alleviate year 2000 computer problems. Subcommittee **Chairman Bill Thomas**, said earlier this week, *"We have to have a solution and it has to be presented as soon as we come back [from the August recess] and it has to mitigate the current problem."* He likened HCFA's failure to propose specific solutions to being on an airplane *"and finding there's only one*

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UPCOMING EVENTS

House Ways and Means Subcommittee

Nancy Johnson

Aug. 6th

House Science Subcommittee

Connie Morella

Aug 6th

Texas Statewide Year 2000 Workshops

Governor George Bush

Aug. 7th-14th

House GROC Subcommittee Field Hearings

Steve Horn

Aug. 13th, 17-18th

House CAO Staff Seminar on Year 2000

116 O'Neil

Aug. 19th

House Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Pete Hoekstra

Sept. 17th

Year 2000 Glossary

BIOS (Basic Input-Output System). A hardware chip found in every personal computer that, among other things, provides date/time information to the computer's software. Older BIOS chips often store dates with 2 digits, causing some chips to assume 01/01/00 is the first day in the year 1900, not the year 2000.

COBOL (Common Business Oriented Language). A computer programming language popular in the past among mainframe programmers. It has since been superseded by several other programming languages. Since so many mainframe programs affected by the Year 2000 bug were written in this language, it has caused a shortage of programmers who understand Cobol.

Compliance When a computer or other electronic system properly interprets the Year 2000 as the first year in the next millennium (as opposed to the January 1, 1900), it is said to be compliant.

Embedded Chip Many electronic devices use small, embedded computer chips whose programming depends on date/time information. For example, many fax machines and copiers use such chips to keep track of how much time has passed since they were last serviced. If a computer chip thinks 100 years has passed since it was last serviced, it may shut itself off.

Source Code A set of human-understandable instructions written in a computer language such as Cobol. These instructions are in turn compiled into code that a computer can execute. Once the program is "compiled," the source code is no longer needed. But without the source code for an old, mainframe computer program, a programmer would find it difficult or impossible to modify the program to fix the Year 2000 problem.

Y2K This acronym stands for "the Year 2000."

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parachute and it's already been used." Thomas' criticisms were echoed by subcommittee ranking member **Fortney (Pete) Stark**, "*The chairman's request is fair,*" he told Hash. During August, Stark said, HCFA officials should "*stay home and get us a plan that will work.*" **CongressDaily**, 8/6/98

Spending on Year 2000 to Soar Next Year. Businesses will devote massive sums next year to solve their Year 2000 computer problems, according to a report from the Gartner Group. Gartner predicts that the amounts involved will be withheld from budgets normally devoted to purchases of new computers and software.

- Gartner predicts that businesses will devote 44 percent of their information technology budgets next year to fixing the Year 2000 problem.
- This is compared to a budget of 5 percent of information technology budgets last year and 30 percent this year.

- Finally, the report states that businesses are already cutting back on software purchases, since companies are concentrating on the 2000 bug and "there's nobody left to install the software".

But businesses don't intend to scrimp on computer systems for company-wide tasks such as purchasing, since they often must be upgraded to be Year 2000 compliant. **USA Today**, "**Budgets Feel Sting of Year 2000 Bug,**" 8/5/98

The poster child for failure? "Already prepared to accept his part is John Hamre, deputy secretary of defense. 'I think we're probably going to be the poster child for failure,' he said last week during a speech to Fortune 500 executives. 'Nobody cares if the Park Service computers don't come on. Okay? But what's going to happen if some do (not) in the DoD?'" **Time**, 7/30/98

For up-to-date information on Congressional activity, take a look at <http://freedom.gov/y2k>